Kiss Me, Hold Me, Taste Me, Fuck Me

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Kiss Me, Hold Me, Taste Me, Fuck Me

by TheWitchofStJohns, UnknownMusing

Summary

Will discovers when left alone in Hannibal's office that the man has a secret. He decides to explore it by becoming a new admirer of the Chesapeake Ripper called "Pearl-Lace," leaving little presents for Hannibal at every crime scene.

Notes

04/27/19: Greetings from this fic's (and series') new co-author, VintageFloof! Endless thanks to UnknownMusing for letting me take a shot at my first Hannigram fic. I've spruced this one up; hope you like it! I'll be doing the same with the second fic in this series as well. Enjoy!

The Special Box

(Nimue and Pearl-Lace by antenahenantenna on Twitter)

The box, creme white with a black ribbon tied around it, lies beneath some drawings Hannibal had done long ago. Gently, a pair of hands reaches within and extracts it from its hiding place. They place the box on the desk in the soft sunlight which streams through a gap in the curtains.

Sea bluish-green eyes stare at it. A hand lifts the lid carefully and places it to one side. What lies within is a sight that surprises. Fingertips lightly brush the La Perla lace thongs, knickers, tights, and a blue ribbon.

Taking a deep breath and calming his heart rate, a conspiratorial smile slowly spreads across Will Graham's face. It was time to plan a date with.....the Chesapeake Ripper.

The Box's Purpose

Chapter Summary

> UnknownMusing sez: Please leave comments on what you think so far. Short chapters at the moment because I'm typing it by using my phone on a bus. The bus sometimes goes over bumps that make it difficult to type so any mistakes that is the reason why. Plus weather today in Scotland - rain, dreary and dismal. To quote "It always rains in Scotland"
>
> VintageFloof sez: It always rains in Portland too! Or so they say.

The deep shade of crimson lipstick is slowly applied to fine, smooth, kissable lips as maroon eyes keep glancing in the mirror to make sure nothing goes wrong.

Over the top lip, until it is completely covered, then the bottom lip. Then gently purse them together to ensure both are fully covered.

Pleased with the outcome, Hannibal Lecter rises slowly from the ornate chair close to the makeup table. He walks across the plush carpet in the room that no one else knows about and picks up the white creme box with the black ribbon on it.

After taking out the La Perla collection, Hannibal calmly slips the lace thongs on with simple practiced ease, followed by the clip-on tights. He smooths them so they don't get wrinkled and reaches for the final item - the light sea bluish-green ribbon.

A Body Lying Among Rose, Deadly Nightshade and Sakura Blossom Petals

Chapter Summary

> UnknownMusing sez: Now we get into the story fully. Apologises for late delay of adding more and plus I'm using my phone at the moment because laptop is in Updating mode again and WiFi is down in my house as well. Please leave comments on what you think so far. Murder scene will be a flashback in next chapter.
>
> VintageFloof sez: I'm just loving the underwear.

Hannibal Lecter, exhausted and sated from a euphoric night of hunting, lies under the soft silk covers of the large king size bed, nude as the day he was born, calmly sleeping when a harsh vibrating sound chooses this inconvenient moment to shatter his peaceful sleep.

Grumbling a Lithuanian curse, he reluctantly lifts his hand from under the soft warm covers, then reaches for the offending object. The illuminated screen of his mobile phone tells him that it is 5:34 a.m. and it is Jack Crawford calling. Pressing the answer button, he brings the phone to his ear.

"There had better be a good explanation for this call, Jack," Hannibal growls.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Lecter. The Chesapeake Ripper has struck again, but with some really strange differences. I think you better come and see."

Hannibal finds himself tapping one hand on the leather steering wheel, trying to figure out what had Jack meant by *"strange differences"* as he remembers last night's hunt and the prey he was hunting.

The underground bar is filled with the haze of curling, writhing smoke from cigarettes, while lily-shaped lamps glow softly in ornate sconces on the walls.

In a far corner of the bar, perched elegantly on a bar stool and sipping a glass of amber liquid, is Hannibal Lecter, unrecognisable with the crimson lipstick and gloss to make it shine - wearing a long black dress adorned with golden ginkgo leaves.

His hair is slicked back a certain way, and teardrop earrings like droplets of blood hang from his ears, glinting in the faint light each time he moves to look for his prey.

He finally spots a potential victim, heading up to the barmaid to order some drinks for their mates. Picking up his cigarette in the antique gold cigarette holder, Hannibal brings it up to

his mouth to place between fine lips.

The prey turns to look at him, taking in every detail of his body. Hannibal reaches into his beaded evening bag for a lighter when the flame from a very expensive lighter - indeed, he notices - soon illuminates his face for a brief moment in the darkened corner.

Hannibal leans close to light his cigarette, flicking his gaze upwards in a certain coy way, and sees how his sweet vulnerable prey is caught between two choices - stay and talk to this lovely cross-dresser, or go back to their mates who are waiting for their thirteenth round of drinks no doubt.

"You...don't have to go back to them. I do...get rather lonely without any company. I haven't had any for a long time, ever since my ex treated me so badly for...what I do," Hannibal purrs out, low and seductive, reaching for the prey's hand and stroking it lightly with his fingertips. The flirty gesture makes them look down, then back up at Hannibal again.

"Do you have a name?" they ask him, making him smile softly. With a wave, Hannibal invites them to sit down on the empty stool next to him.

"You can call me...Nimue," he replies, placing his hand over theirs, already imagining the perfect tableau for them.

Coming out of the memory, Hannibal pulls the car into a free space close to the crime scene, seeing Will's car parked up ahead. He breathes slowly in and out to calm his rage that someone had messed with his tableau, then unclips the seatbelt.

Calmly he gets out of the car, closing the door before he walks ahead and sees Jack, close to the fluttering yellow police tape, arguing once again with Freddie Lounds. Price and Zeller meanwhile are hedging bets on who will win the argument. Hannibal stalks past them and approaches his tableau.

The prey he had killed last night is still in the same place against the riverbank.

But not in the position he had put it in.

Instead it has been laid out in a hollow which has been dug for it. Scattered around the prey are many flower petals - roses, deadly nightshade and sakura blossom.

The hands of his prey have been arranged to suggest they were morbidly enticing someone to come nearer to them and embrace them. The head was turned at a certain angle to bare the pale expanse of throat and one blood red teardrop earring.

Hannibal recognises it as one of his own. When the prey had tried to escape, they slapped him across the face, causing the earring to come flying off to land in the darkened alleyway somewhere in the shadows.

It seems someone had found it and used it.

But...*who?*

Watching From Afar at What the Ripper Does to Catch His Prey

Chapter Summary

UnknownMusing sez: This is Pearl-Lace's P.O.V and what they see Hannibal doing by watching from afar. Told in Italics. Plus witnessing a near attempted sexual assault by the prey on Hannibal, only for him to then murder them. Plus typing this up on my phone as well, because you're all greedy good readers and quests who want more. Comments and kudos welcome.

VintageFloof sez: The plot thickens!

Pearl-Lace/Will's P.O.V:

The underground bar is filled with wreathing smoke that curls and wisps in the environment as I slowly descend the steps leading down to it, seeing Hannibal sitting in the far corner of the bar.

He is beautiful. Those soft kissable lips of his outlined by the cherry lipstick, crimson teardrop earrings dangling from his ears, then finally the black dress with golden ginkgo leaves on it.

I'm wearing a lime green dress that splits at the thighs and has a fragile lace piece attached to a ornate choker that also becomes sleeves right down to the hands. Underneath is the corset I had bought after discovering Hannibal's secret in the drawer in his office.

I want to go up to him. But instead I head to a corner booth after ordering a glass of absinthe. Carrying it, I walk silently past a bunch of young men who are about to get their possibly thirteenth round of drinks - or maybe not, as Hannibal seductively flirts with their friend.

One of them manages a quick slap on my ass, making me throw him a slightly peeved look, then wink flirtatiously at him as I head to my seat.

If Hannibal had seen me, he might have recognised me. But this get-up was my alter ego and something I had wanted to do since I was seventeen years old and living with my father, who had also been a drag queen in his time.

Mother had quelled all of that by burning his drag queen outfits out in the garden. She was ashamed of what her hoity-toity friends would think if they discovered her husband's "shameful and disgusting secret," as she called it.

I come out of that memory, seeing how Hannibal has enticed the prey to sit down next to him. They begin to chat among themselves.

I take sip of the absinthe, jealousy and anger surging in my veins when the prey reaches out to place a hand on one of Hannibal's thighs. They then slip it upwards under the dress, the brazen action causing Hannibal to give a slight hitched gasp.

They move their hand a little more, making Hannibal lean into them to breathlessly whisper in their ear something I don't hear. They soon rise from their seats and saunter towards the exit.

I follow them both outside into the cold air, seeing how the prey keeps on incessantly fondling Hannibal, who is still managing to keep up the act as the hand between his thighs feels through the fine lace La Perla panties I can see peeking out slightly from the dress.

Hannibal soon grabs hold of them to haul them into a darkened alleyway where I silently follow.

I soon stop short when I see Hannibal slammed face first up against the brick wall as the prey starts to rip the dress apart. Hannibal lets loose with a warning snarl.

I see a glint of something in Hannibal's hand, silver and metallic, followed by him stabbing into their side, dragging the curved devil's claw knife downwards to rip the flesh apart at the same time the prey looks at him in shock and surprise as crimson rivulets begin to stream down either side of their mouth.

I want to step closer to take hold of Hannibal. Pull him back to me and kiss him heavily, smearing both our lipsticks - lime sea bluish-green mixing with cherry crimson.

I want to be the one to hunt with him, instead of watching from afar. But for I now I must.

This prey will also soon be my design.

My courting gift to him.

Along with a poem wrapped in lace and a pearl on top.

Remembering the Hunt Last Night as the Body of One's Prey is Observed

Chapter Summary

Author's Note: Cross-dresser phobia scene involved in this chapter.

Hannibal Lecter's Memory Palace is vast, with memories and places like ***Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore*** in Florence, Italy ingrained into it so that every time he sinks into a deep sense of calm, that is where he goes.

It is where he is at the moment, exploring the memory of the hunt last night.

The underground bar is filled with the haze of curling, writhing smoke from cigarettes, while lily-shaped lamps glow softly in ornate scones on the walls.

In a far corner of the bar, perched elegantly on a stool and sipping a glass of amber liquid, Hannibal Lecter – unrecognisable with the crimson lipstick and gloss to make it shine – wears a long black dress with light golden ginkgo leaves on it.

His hair is slicked back a certain way, and teardrop earrings like droplets of blood hang from his ears. They glint in the faint light each time he moves to look for the ***Prey*** *. He finally spots them heading up to the barmaid to order some drinks for their mates. Picking up his cigarette in an antique gold cigarette holder, Hannibal brings it to his mouth to place it between fine lips.*

The ***Prey*** *turns to look at him, taking in every detail of his body. Hannibal reaches into his beaded evening bag to retrieve his lighter, when the flame from a very expensive lighter - indeed, he notices - soon illuminates his face for a brief moment in the darkened corner of the bar. He leans close to light his cigarette, flicking his gaze upwards in a certain coy way, and sees how the* ***Prey*** *is torn between two choices - stay to talk to this strange cross-dresser, or go back to his mates, who are waiting for their thirteenth round of drinks no doubt.*

"You…don't have to go back to them. I do…get rather lonely without any company. I haven't had any for a very long time, ever since my ex treated me so badly for...what I do," Hannibal says, reaching for the ***Prey's*** *hand and stroking it flirtatiously with his fingertips, making them look down, then back up again at him.*

"Do you have a name?" they ask him, making him smile softly. With a wave, Hannibal invites them to sit down on the empty stool next to him.

"You can…call me….Nimue," he replies, placing his hand over theirs, already imagining the perfect tableau for them.

*The **Prey** is oblivious, even when they stumble into an alleyway with Hannibal being slammed face first up against the brick wall. Hannibal slowly unfolds the small but deadly devil's claw knife in his free hand. He feels their slobbering mouth, stinking with alcohol, press against his ear as they tear at his dress and growl with disgust:*

"I think after I fuck your faggot hole raw, bitch, I'll just leave you in this alleyway with my cum and your blood running down the inside of your thighs. You'd enjoy that…cockslut."

*They have not sensed it. Hannibal whirls around with a snarl, stabbing into their side, causing a muffled grunt of shock and surprise to come from the **Prey** who pulls back with blood starting to seep out of their mouth and trickle down the sides of their lips. Then he twists it more effectively, slicing upwards to split the skin apart – like fabric being ripped apart at the seam.*

"Hush now. Hush now. Don't worry. I'll take…care of you. I promise. And I always…keep my promises."

*Afterwards he is back in the bar, pretend-weeping as he tells the **Prey's** mates what their supposed friend had tried to do to him. He hears shocked and sickened exclamations of disgust while they all insist on escorting him home so it doesn't happen again.*

Hannibal politely declines their offer and allows them to kiss his cheeks lightly, while one of them, Anthony Dimmond – who is leaving tomorrow for Florence - gives him his handkerchief to wipe away the trails of mascara which have stained his fine cheekbones.

He does allow Dimmond to help him walk up the stairs of the underground bar into the cold night air, where the first snowflakes have started to spiral down. Pulling the soft fake fur coat closer around him and the now-tattered dress, he allows the not-Will to walk him to his car.

Dimmond says nothing, only gives him a light kiss on the lips and pushes away the hand attempting to return the handkerchief, indicating Hannibal may keep it.

Hannibal does.

There is now a heated discussion in the morgue room between Price and Zeller, discussing the best way to open the body carefully and gently, as Hannibal, still deep in his ***Memory Palace*** , slowly comes out of the ***Memory***.

If anyone were to look at him, they would just think he was bored and would rather be somewhere else.

Not understanding the concept of what a ***Memory Palace*** was.

“Okay, we delicately take the light blue thread out, then get to the other stuff as they watch,” Zeller says, followed by Price rolling his eyes and bringing over what they need to start opening the body.

A cracking noise, followed by a gasp of “*What the hell…is this?!!”* coming from both Price and Zeller, make Hannibal fully aware of what is happening in reality. He heads over to see, nestled where the heart lies, a special kind of paper wrapped up in…..soft lace.

It is, however, what has been placed on top of it that sets his heart thrumming at a dizzying pace, threatening to escape his rib cage – a pearl, gleaming white, and a real one.

His mother had once told him, before she had been brutally murdered in front of his and his sister Mischa’s eyes, that pearls were a ***Courting Gift***, and someone would one day, when he was older, give them to him – one at different times – until the very last one.

Slipping on a pair of gloves, he carefully takes the lace-wrapped paper and the pearl out of the gaping chest cavity and carries them over to place them in a metal tray as Jack, who has come into the large morgue area, walks over to have a look as well. Placing his hands on the lace, Hannibal unwraps it and gently smooths out the paper, revealing a poem that has been written for him by this secret ***Admirer*** of his.

Your heart is aflutter no doubt

Like the soft stirring of butterfly wings as it begins to stretch them out

In the soft morning light

I saw you from afar

So beautiful, hauntingly so

I ache for you

By just thinking of kissing those soft lips of yours

Wondering how they would feel against mine

My gift to you…is my ***Pearl***

And there will be more to come

Until they become a necklace for you

*A necklace to show off your inner **Aphrodite** within yourself*

*My sweet **Ripper***

The Gift Given in Reply to the Gift One Had Left for the Ripper

Chapter Summary

UnknownMusing sez: Short chapter, I know. But more in the next one.

VintageFloof sez: Including SMUT!! (in the next chapter, I mean)

A vibrating, humming noise makes Will shift in his sleep, pleasantly dreaming of what had happened in the alleyway, with the added bonus of grabbing Hannibal to kiss him so heavily their lipstick had soon smeared together.

It vibrates again, this time more incessantly, making him flick his eyes open. Rising up slightly like a feline stretching, he reaches for his phone and sees it is Jack calling him.

Had the Ripper already replied to his Gift within the body of their Prey?

His thumb hovering in anticipation, Will answers it and brings the phone to his ear. He hears shouting, followed by Jack shouting something back, followed by Jack sighing heavily.

"*Will, it's him. You need to get down here."*

"Where?"

"Baltimore - the old toy factory."

"All right. I'll be there."

Jack cuts off, leaving Will to lie there looking up at the ceiling, smiling softly at the fact that Hannibal had managed to make sure Pearl-Lace got a gift back from the ***Ripper*** so quickly.

Swinging his legs off the bed, he gets up and slowly heads to the bathroom, passing the seven snoozing dogs – Winston, Buster, Cria, Yui, Kisto, Hanto, Yukish – and then looks at himself in the bathroom mirror.

Pearl-Lace, hidden beneath his skin, appears in the mirror for a brief moment. Leaning close, Will places his lips against the cold glass over the reflection, feeling the coldness of it against them.

In his mind he is imagining a different pair of lips brushing against his – Hannibal's lips.

When Will finally reaches the crime scene, he parks his car close to Jack's large Land Rover and then just sits there, looking at the sight in front of him. He feels his heart start to thud against his rib cage.

The Gift.

One that has been given to him by Hannibal.

Unfastening his seat belt, he gets out the car and heads over to Jack, who is waiting impatiently for him. Willing his heart to stop thudding against his rib cage, he looks at the circular tent which has been erected by Hannibal. Placing a gloved hand on one of the curtains, he pulls it back slightly to look within.

Two bodies are displayed in the pose of "***The Kiss"*** by Klimt. Will sees how Hannibal has placed the bodies in such an intimate way. He knows he will have to up the ante in his own gifts to the man he is courting.

Will knows that if they are ever discovered and Hannibal is arrested by Jack, people will say they are in ***Love*** and Freddie Lounds will have a field day writing articles about it on TattleCrime's website.

It was ***Love.***

The kind that only he and Hannibal understood, because the older man can see potential in him. He steps closer, seeing, hidden from sight, that the two bodies have been stitched together. He waits for the rest of the forensics team to leave when Jack gives the order.

He soon closes his eyes, allowing the golden pendulum to swing once, twice and finally a third time, dragging him into the crime scene.

You gave me a gift, ***Pearl-Lace.***

I return the favour by giving you one back in a way that I know you will appreciate. I choose two ***Prey*** *who are suited to this* ***Tableau*** *of mine, and after taking what I need, place them in the pose of my intention.*

*I stitch them together with black thread, sewing them to become entwined like Klimt's "****The Kiss****," and stepping back to admire my work, wish you were with me.*

Holding me from behind to stabilise me.

This is my ***Design.***

This is my ***Gift*** *to you*

Invited to a Dinner Party by the Ripper, Where Intense Fiery Passion Arises

Chapter Summary

UnknownMusing sez: 100% Smut and just Smut, then later of course the dinner party. But Smut first, then a little bit of dinner party, followed by…mehh…more Smut.

Blame Purplesocrates, my Smut Hannigram Queen and metaphorical Sister.

VintageFloof sez: Hope you're wearing asbestos knickers

The letter with Hannibal's elegant handwriting arrives on Friday, just as Will is returning from taking the dogs out for a long-needed walk. Picking the envelope up from the porch, he allows them to go in ahead of him.

He looks at his name carefully written on the thick creme-colored envelope in fancy Elizabethan script, and his heart begins to flutter in his chest. Heading over to the old rocking chair on the porch, he sits down to slit it open and begins to read, hearing Hannibal's smoky voice in his mind as he does so.

Dear Will,

I would appreciate your company at a dinner party at my home this Saturday night at 7:00. You need only bring yourself and no one else. Although I anticipate that you and I will desire some time alone together later in the evening, I have also invited Jack Crawford and his wife to the table, along with Alana Bloom and an old colleague of mine, Dr. Donald Sutcliffe, who informs me he is bringing a guest with him.

Hannibal

Will smiles softly at Hannibal's signature, written with a flourish of the pen in his inimitable style. Will sits back in the rocking chair, still smiling, heart thudding quietly, his gaze unfocused and his thoughts drifting. He is soon brought back down to earth, however, as Winston, Buster, Cria, Yui, Kisto, Hanto, and Yukish insist it's past their dinner time.

Each dog receives a generous bowlful of Will's specially prepared homemade dog food, along with many pets and skritches. While the dogs enjoy their dinner, Will goes to the living room and places the letter in the bottom of his chest of drawers, underneath a black box with a crimson ribbon wrapped around it.

Saturday night arrives with a slow gentle ease, like the opening strains of a waltz, as Will eases into the driveway of Hannibal's house. Standing on the stone front steps, looking impossibly, effortlessly handsome, is the man himself, waiting for his guests.

Will is glad he is the first to arrive and not the last. It would be rude of him to be last and late. He pulls up neatly beside Hannibal's car, then nervously smooths down his black leather trousers and wonders what the older man would think if he knew Will was ***Pearl-Lace.***

That underneath his clothes he is wearing La Perla "Crimson Night" lace panties and tights with suspenders on them. Around his throat he is wearing a maroon ribbon choker; his legs are adorned in high-heeled lace-up boots that his father had sent him for his thirty-first birthday.

Unbuckling his seat belt, Will gets out of the car and closes the door behind him. He smiles as he nears the steps and gets a better look at Hannibal, who he sees is wearing diamond studded earrings. Will wonders if underneath the man is wearing one of his many lingerie collections. He ascends the stone steps, his eyes locked on Hannibal's and his smile growing wider.

"Will, you look….utterly divine," Hannibal breathes, stepping close to him on high-heeled shoes. He leans close to Will, inhaling deeply the delicate perfume Will had chosen to wear.

Will hears in the process a soft breathless moan – so faint it sounds like a gentle breeze ruffling the tops of the trees.

"I aim to make sure….I provide nourishment for those who like to look at me, Hannibal," Will says, flirting seductively while wishing that Hannibal would just grab him around the hips to pull him close and smash his lips into his.

Followed by dragging him inside and upstairs where, after cancelling the dinner party, they could thoroughly ravage each other in pleasure and ecstasy on dark blue silken sheets decorated with gold ginkgo leaves.

"Is that……***Peach Blossom Sin….***you're wearing, Will?" the older man asks him, stepping closer. Their chests are touching now. Tilting his head back slightly to expose his throat, Will sees how Hannibal licks his lips to wet them at the sight of pale, unmarked skin.

"Why? Do you like it or would you prefer what I get for Christmas?" he teases, suddenly feeling Hannibal grab hold of him to pull him into the house, closing the double doors behind them both. He lifts Will up in his strong arms and slams him against the wall, next to (in Will's mind, but he is barely thinking at the moment) a hideous, odious painting. The impact

of Will hitting the wall sends the questionable work of art crashing to the floor, the glass of the frame emitting a tinkling smash as it breaks into a million pieces.

Will's hands are seized around his wrists and lifted up to be pinned above his head, where he feels a macabre Gothic candle holder – empty – attached to the wall. A wicked idea begins to form in his mind. Looking up at Hannibal, he sees the man is thinking the same thing. Will hears the clink of a belt being unbuckled, his rapt gaze never leaving Hannibal's, followed by the belt's smooth leather being wrapped around his wrists and the rest wound around the Gothic candle holder. The older man lowers his head, maroon eyes dark with passion and want. He wraps his arms around Will, presses him close, and kisses him heavily.

Will kisses back, flicking his tongue over soft, kissable lips. Hannibal accepts the admittance asked for, opening his mouth to allow Will to probe it deeply with his tongue – feeling the enticingly sharp canine teeth, which could easily rip out his own throat or someone else's, for that matter. Sparks of danger and desire shoot through Will's blood as they begin to grind their hips into each other, tongues still entwined and breaths growing heavy and hot. One of Hannibal's large hands slowly slides down to caress Will's beautiful ass, supple and smooth beneath black leather.

Saliva is exchanged and trickles down the side of their mouths. Through the fog of his desire, Hannibal realizes that exciting as it is to have Will's hands bound, he would much prefer to have them on his body. Without breaking the kiss, the arm around Will's back reaches up blindly and releases his wrists from their bond. The passionate kisses continue as hands fumble clumsily to undo trousers. Breathless sighs and moans fill the air, while Will strokes Hannibal through the soft lace panties he wears, feeling the outline of how large, throbbing and pulsating the older man is.

"*The….things you do to me, Will. The….way you make me feel. It's like wicked tongues of flame are caressing me from within and making me so….hot and aching for you,"* Hannibal pants out, between kisses, rocking his hips into Will's hand that cups him.

Hannibal reluctantly breaks the kiss and tilts his head back to breathe. He shudders heavily with a soft breathless moan at the debauched look he sees on the younger man's flushed face. He slips downwards to place Will's thighs in the crooks of his arms. Kneeling almost reverently, he pulls the leather trousers further apart and down a bit more with his teeth. His eyes widen and his brain scrambles as he sees the lace panties Will is wearing.

So this is Will's secret as well.

He leans close, caressing the lace-covered bulge with his lips and upwards to where pearls of pre-cum are beginning to seep from the tip of Will's cock, soaking through the lace fabric. Hannibal extends his hungry tongue and licks upwards, causing a hitched gasp to come from Will and soon the loud ecstatic cry of his name - "*Hannibal!!!"*

The taste of Will is like the sweetest ambrosia. Placing his teeth against the lace, he rips it to fully expose Will's beautiful cock. He then bends his sleek head between Will's thighs, tasting him intimately. The hallway near the dining room is soon filled with soft moans and breathless gasps that become music to his ears.

A symphony of pleasure and ecstasy.

Will can still feel the chemical endorphins of sexual arousal running through him, even when he now sits to Hannibal's right, across from Alana. Next to him are Jack with Bella, and across from them sit Dr. Sutcliffe and a young man called Matthew Brown.

Hannibal is busy in the kitchen, applying the final touches to the dinner he has made. Picking up the glass of fine wine, Will takes a sip to calm himself. Hannibal soon appears, bearing the plates of food for the first course.

"That smells amazing, Hannibal. What is it?" he hears Jack ask. Hannibal replies, "For the first course, oysters in gelée, a dish I was taught by a French cook in Paris when I was very young. Though some would consider the oyster to be... an aphrodisiac. Young men in ancient Greece believed it…spurred their sexual desire."

Laughter fills the dining room, while Will flicks his gaze up to Hannibal when the man places his plate down in front of him. They are so close he could lean up, right in front of everyone, to pull the older man into a heart-stopping kiss.

Hannibal moves away, breaking that spell, to sit down himself, after unbuttoning the bottom button of his waistcoat. Knowing it is rude of him to start eating without the older man's permission, Will takes one of the oyster shells, staring at the viscous fluid of the meat topped with tiny cubes of aspic. He brings it to his lips, tips it down to swallow the meat.

He can feel maroon eyes watching the way his Adam's apple bobs when he swallows. Lowering the oyster shell back down on the plate, he sees how Hannibal is smiling as he brings his own up, doing the same.

Soon chatter and laughter fills the dining room, while the oysters are either left or devoured by the gracious guests. More wine is poured.

"So, Mrs. Crawford, are you an Annabelle or an Isabella?" Will hears Hannibal ask Jack's wife – who he can see is not eating at all – and she smiles softly at him.

"A Phyllis. Only Jack calls me Bella," she replies, making Jack tell the story of how he met her in Florence, Italy, when she was working for NATO. The Italian men would call out "*Bella, bella!"* (beautiful!) as she walked down the city streets, so he wanted her to be his.

They married a few days later.

Their wedding day had been a beautiful day for them both.

As he is taking another sip of wine, Will suddenly notices, out of the corner of his eye, that Matthew Brown seems to be watching Hannibal with a kind of curiosity. Will leans close to Hannibal, who turns his face slightly to acknowledge him.

"*Would you like some help to bring the main course through*?" Will whispers, making sure his lips are close enough to Hannibal's ear to make him give a subtle shiver at the feel of his hot breath on his cheek.

The older man nods, getting up to take away the empty dishes and clear the table for the main course. Heading through to the kitchen, he can feel Will's burning gaze on his back. Jealous, no doubt, at what he had seen.

The large kitchen of Hannibal's home is quiet and peaceful, with a marble kitchen island in the center to accommodate any produce brought in from the herb and vegetable plot outside.

Going up to the double doors that lead out onto the porch and into the back garden, Will can see the shadow of a tall sakura blossom tree near a pond, with small Japanese spirit shrines close to it. Large clever hands wrap around his waist, pulling him back flush against a warm chest.

"The meat will spoil," Will says quietly, feeling Hannibal nuzzle his nose softly against his cheek and up to his ear to whisper, "*There is... a better dish in front of me I would rather savour."* He is turned around to face the older man, who begins to slowly walk backwards, pulling him along until they reach the island.

"Tell me or show me," Will hears himself saying to Hannibal.

With a quirk of his eyebrow and a half-smile on his lips, Hannibal gracefully turns his back to him and calmly unbuckles his belt. He slips his suit trousers down and off to reveal the fine lace thong and tights, then bends over the polished marble surface to present himself.

Will almost forgets how to breathe at the sight. He slowly walks over and places the palm of his trembling hand on the dip of Hannibal's spine, feeling the stays of a fine corset. Hauling the older man up – after slipping his own trousers down and off – he unbuttons the fine black waistcoat and the crimson shirt.

Hannibal helps him to slip them off, allowing them to fall to the kitchen floor with a muffled thump. A hand comes up to take hold of the back of Will's head to sift through his curls, and he unbuttons his own shirt, chucking it to the armchair in the far corner of the kitchen. They fall once again into passionate kisses, savouring the taste of the oysters and rich wine.

Soft wanton moans and heavy breathless panting are coming from them both, while Will remembers that just next door the rest of the dinner party are waiting for the main course – lambs' hearts in hot sauce, with root vegetables and sweet baby potatoes – and could possibly hear them.

Hannibal, though, doesn't seem to care about being overheard and releases Will's lips, a strand of saliva still connecting their lips together. Will gently turns him to face the island, and Hannibal assumes his previous position, heart pounding in anticipation. A warm hand slipping into the confines of his lace thong from behind makes Hannibal tilt his head back and gasp softly.

Fingers already coated in lube (Will had a small bottle tucked away in his inside blazer pocket) rub against his puckered entrance, spreading the lube and teasing gently. The fingers soon press inwards and Will begins to scissor and stretch, as evidence of his arousal, covered by his fine lace panties, presses against Hannibal's thigh.

Hannibal presses back against the hand, rocking his magnificent ass slowly back and forth, feeling the fingers reach deep inside to rub the wee gland within that makes him gasp and clench around them. Finally they slip out, making him feel bereft of the loss.

After removing his lace undies, Will pulls Hannibal up again and leads him to the narrow end of the island, patting the marble surface with an insouciant smile to indicate Hannibal should hop up and lie down. Hannibal, who would normally be absolutely scandalized by the mere thought of having sex in the kitchen, much less on a food-preparing surface, obeys without hesitation. His breathing stutters as Will lifts his legs onto his shoulders, still covered in the elegant tights. They gaze at one another for what seems like an eternity, the anticipation of this moment holding them in its thrall. Hannibal's eyes drift closed as Will caresses his thighs. He loses track of time for a moment, only to bite his bottom lip as a long, breathless moan threatens to escape when he feels Will push aside the lace that lies over his slicked and stretched entrance, and slowly begin to slide the head of his cock inside. Will continues to sink into him until he is fully sheathed within.

Will shudders heavily when he feels himself now within Hannibal's tight, warm insides. Willing his heart to stop thudding against his rib cage, he slowly and gently begins to undulate his hips back and forth. Hannibal grasps the sides of the island, wanting to keep gazing into the wicked depths of Will's ocean blue eyes, but pleasure overtakes him. He tilts his head back and closes his eyes in bliss, gasping and grunting softly with each thrust.

Will pulls back slightly to look down each time he slides his cock in and out of the warm, clenching, tight and hot rim of Hannibal's ass, mesmerized by the sight. He is pulled down into a breathless kiss by Hannibal, who is flushed, sweating and looking utterly debauched.

They are well on the way to losing themselves in fiery passion and ecstasy.

The Morning After the Dinner Party

Chapter Summary

Authors' Note – The rest of the chapters will be written in Hannibal and Will's P.O.V.

Hannibal's P.O.V:

Sunlight filters through a gap in the ink blue curtains of my bedroom to shine a shaft of light down onto the large king size bed as I softly flutter my eyes open, basking for moment in the warmth. I smile sleepily at the still-dozing form of Will Graham under the covers. We are both nude.

He looks peaceful and calm. No nightmare at the moment to disturb his sleep. I hear him give a small "*Hmm*," followed by his arms reaching out for me. I allow him to pull me close to him. Sea bluish-green eyes open to look up at me and he smiles, still hazy with sleep, causing me to bend my head down to kiss him lightly.

Our lips gently move against each other. He changes position each time to deepen the kiss, then pulls back to bury his face into the crook of my neck, wrapping his arms around me to hold me close.

"It feels good being in your ar…Oh god!!!? The dogs!!!?" Suddenly panicked, he remembers his dogs have been waiting for him all night back in Wolf Trap. He scrambles out of bed; I pull him back to stop him from going further.

"Will, calm yourself. I brought them here while you were asleep and placed them in the large kennel I have outside," I reassure him, leading him over to the window to show him the outdoor kennel in the garden.

Seeing him smile at the sight of all seven dogs napping in the sun and enjoying themselves brings an unaccustomed warmth to my heart. I snake my arms around his waist from behind, nuzzling into his hair as my cock begins to rise against his breathtakingly exquisite ass.

"You…I don't what to say," Will breathes, surprised and amazed I had performed such a task for him. He turns in my arms to face me, smiling, while I lift him up and lay him on his back on the window seat. Licking my lips, I stroke his cheek lightly with my thumb.

"I want to make love to you. May I?" I ask him. His bright eyes and wide smile are my answer. I quickly retrieve the bottle of lube from the bedside table. Like the mischievous imp he is, he grins and snatches it from my hand, dangling it in front of my face for a moment before uncapping it and pouring some of the stuff into the palm of his hand. He slowly rubs his palms together as he looks up at me from underneath those beautiful eyelashes.

"Come here, Hannibal," he purrs, beckoning me closer. I eagerly obey. He slips a slicked-up hand downwards, causing me to arch slightly at the touch of his hand on me. With great difficulty I resist the urge to thrust my hips forward as he strokes me from where pre-cum is already forming small white pearls at the tip, to down below, cupping me in a certain way that drives me wild. I have to place both hands on the glass window to stabilise myself.

His knees drawn up, the other hand is busy between his own thighs, prepping himself for me. He moans heavily, baring his neck in the process, then breathes out *"Enter me, Hannibal.*" Moving his hands away and kneeling before him on the window seat, I enter him with a single thrust of my hips.

A breathless hitched moan escapes Will's lovely mouth. He wraps his legs around my waist and I hover so very close above him, my hands on either side of his head as he grips my arms and looks into my eyes with an expression of adoration. I begin to thrust into him, slow and hard. He rocks his hips in tandem with mine, his lovely hard cock caught between us, as I watch every expression and movement he makes.

The way he gasps breathlessly, lips parted in soft moans and cries of pleasure. The arch of his spine off the soft fabric of the window seat. His hands on my ass, desperately pulling me deeper and deeper inside him.

Tensing my muscles, I speed up slightly as I begin to feel the pressure building within me coming to a climax. I press my forehead against Will's, staring into the depths of his eyes as he whispers my name like a prayer.

It hits so suddenly. I find myself arching my back heavily, distantly feeling Will tighten his thighs around my waist as I cry out his name over and over, whiteness clouding my vision.

I manage to block out every external sound around me, except for the beating of my heart within my rib cage and every beautiful sound coming from Will's lips. Every fibre of my being tenses as I slowly release my seed into him – filling his warm, tight, clenching insides with it. With a strangled cry Will reaches his own climax, tossing his head back as thick white ropes shoot out to decorate our abdomens and chests.

Euphoric is the only word I can think of to describe my emotions during this time.

Breakfast at the dinner table is a simple meal of fluffy scrambled eggs, sausages and sliced baby tomatoes that we share together on one plate, giving the excuse that it spares us the bother of washing two dishes. The real reason, of course, is to enjoy one another's closeness and warmth.

“It’s a beautiful day,” Will comments, looking out the dining room double door windows. Grinning, he turns his face back to me. “Come and walk the dogs with me, Hannibal, please?” he pleads so sweetly, making those (ironically) puppy dog eyes that I simply cannot resist. I glance through the window at the seven dogs, now released from their kennel, lounging on the porch waiting for a walk.

“Anything for you***, mylimasis***,” I say, smiling back at him and getting up to clear the table. I find myself swaying my hips as I walk, just to hear his gentle laughter fill the dining room. “You're such a diva, Hannibal.”

Yes. But I’m your diva and no one else’s.

Walking the seven dogs - Winston, Buster, Cria, Yui, Kisto, Hanto, and Yukish – with Will’s arm in mine as we stroll down the forest path together, feeling him clasp his hand in mine, feels peaceful and beautiful.

“What are you thinking about?” Will asks me, when with my free hand I throw a stick for the dogs to go after, listening to their excited yips and barking.

“Nothing that concerns you, dear Will. Just happiness that you’re here with me,” I reply, turning to face him. I lean forwards and rest my forehead against his, aching to say the words.

But they don’t come out. Instead I capture his lips with mine to distract him from asking me about the silence, and try not to feel like I am slowly being led into a snare.

Who was luring me, though?

Will, or Jack?

Or someone else, hidden in the shadows?

Another Courting Gift, Another Poem, and an Encounter at the Opera

Chapter Summary

Hannibal receives another gift from Pearl-Lace, and has an erotic encounter at the opera while in his Miss Nimue persona.

Hannibal's P.O.V:

Monday is a busy day of appointments with my patients. I calmly allow poor, neurotic, bumbling Franklyn Froideveaux to leave through the back door of my office as he tries hard not to burst into tears.

I tolerate him for a reason. He sees me as someone he could talk to about his friend Tobias Budge – one of the violinists of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra - who had recently been acting strangely.

"Dr. Lecter…umm….thank you," Franklyn says. Just before I move to close the door, he wrings his chubby hands in his handkerchief and tries to catch my eye, as though he wants to say something else.

"Yes, Franklyn? What is it?" I ask politely. He reaches into his suit pocket and hands me a flyer for the Baltimore Concert Opera, which I see is presenting "***Carmen"*** tonight only . Franklyn gives a small smile.

"I saw it and…thought maybe you might be interested. It's on tonight only, I'm afraid, and leaves for…Okinawa, Japan tomorrow. I've already got tickets thanks to Tobias," he says, sighing heavily at his friend's name. A knock on my front office door makes me turn my head to look up at the grandfather clock.

"Same time next week, as usual, Franklyn," I tell him. He nods nervously in reply and heads off, leaving me alone with the flyer in my hand. Closing the door silently, I head over to my desk as another knock, more insistent this time, is heard at the front door.

Smoothing down my suit and waistcoat, I almost wish it were Will in the waiting room. I stroke my neck lightly where, hidden under my shirt, is the first pearl from ***Pearl-Lace*** on the sea bluish-green lace ribbon that I had made into a choker. I can feel the smoothness of it through the fabric.

No one had noticed when I had been close to my own kill in the Behavioral Science Unit that I had come back to take the evidence – the pearl and the poem wrapped in fine lace. Moving to the door, I calmly open it.

The waiting room is empty. Before I can step out of my office, I see a large lingerie box wrapped in crimson ribbon on the floor before me. I bend down to pick it up, carry it into my office and close the door. I endeavor to remain calm. I am only partially successful.

I place the box on my desk, untying the ribbon and placing it to one side. Lifting the lid reveals a lovely, long, sea-bluish green dress that seems to shimmer in the dim office lights as I lift it slowly from the box. Delicate silver ferns embossed upon it provide the shimmer. Entranced, I head into the bathroom with the box and slip off my clothing.

At last I am standing nude, the lace ribbon choker around my neck the only thing adorning my body. Under the tissue paper that had cradled the dress are more surprises - crème white stockings with light blue bows around the edges; a corset that laces from the front, the same colour as the the dress; and resting on top of them, the most thrilling of all - two pearls this time, and a poem, wrapped in lace.

Ripper

At night…..I imagine your touch on my bare skin

Fingertips delicately caressing like a butterfly feeling flowers to look for nectar

Your lips…..outlined in crimson and shining like….blood in the moonlight

Predator *that you are*

Your body…..strong and sleek like that of a panther

You neither hide nor run

I've…watched you….

Thought only of….touching you

Holding you against me

While we writhe entwined…..on soft silk sheets or upon a bed of rose petals

Do you not feel the same for me?

Wouldn't you want to hold me?

Taste me?

Fill me to the point where everything begins to... blur at the edges?

I ache for you.

Do you not ache for me?

"Who is that?"

"Amazing!!!"

"That can't be….Dr. Hannibal Lecter, can it?!!"

"No, I think that is Mrs. Komeda's friend, Miss Nimue."

"Oh."

Whispers like snakes slithering over each other to keep warm reach my ears from other patrons attending tonight's performance as I calmly descend the curved white marble stairs to the large main ballroom of Baltimore's Engineers Club in the fashionable Mount Vernon district.

Here everyone waits before the opera starts. I am wearing the sea bluish-green dress adorned with silver ferns. My old friend Mrs. Komeda, one of the very few who knows of Nimue's existence, catches my eye and is delighted to see me "*in my element.*" She comes to me, smiling and laughing, taking my hand and pulling me into her circle of friends.

I am introduced to them – Mr. Anthony Dimmond, who is glad to see Nimue doing much better than the last time he saw her; a man I already know, Mr. Andrew Caldwell – an independent medical examiner - and finally, a newcomer I have not seen before.

"Now…this is Erisa Ereshkigal," Mrs Komeda says, introducing the person next to her. I nod politely, murmuring a greeting. My eyes drift to a figure standing a short distance away, their back to me. They seem strangely familiar, even though I cannot see their face. Perhaps they sense my gaze, for they turn to face me fully, revealing to my startled eyes….*Will!* Or is it Will? With their hairless face, makeup skillfully but rather heavily applied, and chocolate curls in an insouciant up-do, it is difficult to tell. The ocean blue eyes resemble Will's, at least, and they observe me looking at this new creature strangely.

"You look pale, Nimue. Is everything all right?" Mrs. Komeda asks. I turn my gaze away from Will-or-not-Will in consternation, about to answer her, when a hand slips around my waist and settles on my hip, causing me to stiffen slightly.

"I'm sure Nimue is fine, Mrs. Komeda," a gentle voice says in reply, causing me to turn my head. Somehow I know that standing beside me, softly smiling with an arm draped protectively around me, is…my secret admirer ***Pearl-Lace.***

They are wearing a soft shimmering brown suit jacket and trousers, with purple and gold flowers stitched onto the fabric, and gold stacked-heel pumps. Beneath the jacket I can see a white blouse with lace ruffles on the collar.

"Yes, I'm fine," I manage to get out. "Will you excuse us, please?" Mrs. Komeda nods graciously, and I head away with ***Pearl-Lace*** and walk up the flight of stairs to the second landing.

Sensing eyes watching us from down below as we do so.

The high box.

It is quiet and still up here. I step up to the edge, placing my hands on the fabric balustrade, and look down at the large circular opera stage and the seats that will soon be filled by eager patrons of the arts.

"Have you liked my gifts?" ***Pearl-Lace*** whispers into my ear. They have come up behind me to place their hands on my hips. They slip one hand beneath the dress to cup me through the white lace thong attached to the silk crème white stockings. I would know the caress of that hand anywhere, at any time.

"*You mean…gifts….ohh!….yes, I love them,"* I whisper back, feeling their fingertips brush the tip of my hard, lace-covered cock where pearls of pre-cum are starting to form.

Their other hand slips down my spine, hitching the back of the dress up to reveal their *Gift* to me. I am soon pushed down onto the balustrade. They lean over me, their breath hot against my cheek.

Arching myself against ***Pearl-Lace,*** I look over my shoulder at them, fully aware that the lust I am feeling can be seen on my face. They cover me once more as their hand slips downwards, feeling the seam of the lace thong. After a tantalizing moment, the hand slides down within its confines and caresses my hot bare flesh.

I arch fully, spreading my legs more widely apart and keeping my palms spread on the fabric balustrade. I moan softly – hearing slight echoing around the large area where the opera would soon take place – then I am whirled around to face them. They haul me up onto the balustrade which, thankfully, has a metal railing to stop people from falling over the edge.

"*Take hold of the railing with both your hands,"* a command which I find myself submissively obeying, while they take a curtain tie from one of the high box curtains to tie my wrists to the railing, one crossed over the other.

When they are satisfied I cannot free myself, they take off the fine jacket to place over one of the viewing chairs. They saunter over to me, placing their hands on my thighs, and spread them wide apart. They stand between my legs and kiss me heavily, opening their trousers and letting them and their boxers drop to the floor. A slow hand reaches between both our bodies.

I hear a ripping of fabric, followed by the harsh shove of hips forwards into mine. My head tilts backward, a pleasured moan escaping me before I can stop myself – it echoes around the empty space, barely concealed by the murmur of the crowd below. Pearl-Lace leaves me no time to adjust, entering me slowly but forcefully and with no lube, jolting my body and up down with each thrust.

I writhe uncontrollably, every thrust sending ecstasy running up my spine as they slide in and out of me. I bare my neck and their hot mouth kisses, sucks and bites the pale flesh. They adjust slightly and drape themselves over me, bringing my crème stocking-clad thighs onto their shoulders, filling me so deeply it overwhelms me.

They are…..so deep.....My body….feels like I am burning up within!!!

Trembling underneath them, I suddenly hear voices. I turn my face to see, down below near the double entrance doors, Mrs. Komeda coming in with Andrew Caldwell, Anthony Dimmond – who had told me had missed his flight to Florence - and Erisa Ereshkigal.

It is at that moment when a particularly hard, intense thrust causes me to clench heavily around ***Pearl-Lace's*** cock and give a keening wail of pleasure – which echoes all around - as my back arches heavily off the fabric balustrade.

I have finally succumbed to the pressure that been building up within me. Distantly I can hear from below the shocked gasps of the group, and yet I only pay attention to ***Pearl-Lace*** who looks adoringly into my eyes, then pulls me into a deep, breathless kiss in front of them all as I suddenly realise who they really are.

Will!!!?

The Consequences that Betrayal Brings When the Truth Comes Spilling Out of the Seams

Chapter Summary

Authors' Note:
Quote – “Betrayal is something akin to love. There is the betrayer and the betrayed.” – Bedelia Du Maurier, Season 3

Pearl-Lace/Will's P.O.V.

Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane is one of those places where I do not want to be right at this very moment. I would rather be at home, relaxing with my dogs or checking up on Hannibal at his office.

My appointment with him wasn’t until later in the evening, and so I would have to make do with Dr. Frederick Chilton talking my ear off once again about my empathic abilities. He was obsessed with interviewing me about it. Pulling the car into an empty parking space, I reach into the glove compartment for some aspirin.

I would have to mention the persistent headaches and hallucinations to Hannibal at some point. I wonder if he could recommend a good doctor for some neurology scans.

Maybe his old friend and colleague Dr. Sutcliffe could help me out?

Swallowing the aspirin down with some bottled water, I slowly feel the headache lessen to a dull residual ache. I just hope it won't be aggravated again by Jack or even Chilton, for that matter.

“*What has happened here is very tragic. Especially with the death of one of the nursing staff.*”

“*Dr. Chilton, is it still possible to see the scene of the crime? We need it as fresh as possible.”*

“Ahh, yes. Come this way, gentlemen.”

Stepping into the nurse's room, I see why Chilton had said he already had the Ripper in his clutches. In front of me is a scene that greatly resembles a crime scene called the "***Wound Man."*** The unfortunate nurse is impaled on the metal I.V. stand, her back arched in a certain way, both of her eyes squished down into her sockets.

Stepping closer, I know immediately that Hannibal didn't do this. It is sloppy and too trained-looking to be one of his ***Tableau*** . I slip my glasses off, placing them in my shirt pocket.

I close my eyes. The golden pendulum swings once, twice and finally a third time, dragging me deep into the reconstruction.

Their voices echo around me as they quickly wheel me to the infirmary because they think I had some kind of seizure or stroke. Fools.

They wheel me into the room, where the nurse starts to set up the equipment as I calmly retrieve the skeleton key from a wee nick I had made in my wrist and begin to unlock the handcuff around my wrist.

She is still busy with the sorting and placement of equipment, and it is only when she turns that she sees me standing there. She tries to scream or shout for help, but I silence her by punching her in the larynx, effectively shutting her vocal cords down.

She tries to escape, but I grab hold of her to slam her against the shelving and onto the floor, where she lands on her back. I straddle her, reaching up to her face and shushing her. I place my thumbs on her eyelids, pressing down until hearing a satisfying squelch.

Glancing around, I see the I.V. stand and pull it out. I feel her hands touch my shoe as she tries to crawl away. She doesn't get far. I lift the I.V. stand above her, then bring it down….hard.

Harshly, I come out of the reconstruction, only to suddenly see I'm not in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. I'm in Hannibal's office waiting room. Moving unsteadily backwards, I sit down in a chair and drag my trembling hands down my face.

I had lost time.

I had somehow lost time in the reconstruction or after it.

"Will, this is an unexpected surprise. Your appointment isn't until late this evening. Though today has been…rather quiet without you."

Arriving here unannounced? Yeah, no shit…darling…

I hear ***Pearl-Lace*** saying in my head. Hannibal comes to stand before me, concern in his eyes, just in time to catch me as I fall forward into his arms. Flicking my gaze up to him, I allow him to help me up out of the chair and into his warm, almost homely office.

Fine, rich wine is poured into two glasses.

The light from the lit fire in the hearth is reflected in the polished surface of Hannibal's desk. He turns to look at me sitting in one of the leather-backed black armchairs with the small glass table next to it. I'm feeling calmer, more settled, but there remains an aura of unease in the air.

I have taken off my jacket, placing it over the back of the armchair, and unbuttoned the top three buttons of my salmon shirt. I preoccupy myself by looking through Hannibal's sketchbook of the many different artworks he has done.

“Anything you find interesting, Will?” he asks me, just as I turn the page and see a sketch of…me as my alter-ego ***Pearl-Lace*** and himself writhing on the balcony opera box balustrade, just as it occurred just a few nights ago.

Thighs clenching tightly around my waist.

Hannibal releasing a keening wail of pleasure, followed by being pulled into a breathless kiss by me.

“The ***Ripper’s*** admirer?” I ask, accepting the glass of poured wine from him. I hand him back his sketchbook as he sits down across from me. “Zeller and Price are joking that they’re both plotting *Crème de la Passion* with each other, because of the gifts being given.”

“Is that what they think?” Hannibal asks, not answering my question. He brings one leg up to cross over the other. His gaze is inscrutable.

Placing my glass down on the small table, I stand and make my way to Hannibal's chair. Stepping behind him, I place my hands on his shoulders gently and calmly. I don’t want to spook him and end up with my arm twisted behind my back, or worse, my neck snapped.

“There’s something bothering you, isn’t there, Hannibal?” I ask him, only for him to slip away from me as he gets up from the armchair and heads over to his desk. He picks up his scalpel and begins to sharpen a pencil.

There is only one reason why he is acting like this. He knows deep down inside I am….***Pearl-Lace*** and the one who has been giving him the gifts.

In his mind I have betrayed him. I look around for my messenger bag, retrieve it, then excuse myself by asking if I can use the restroom.

He gives a nod in reply and nothing more.

Inside the dimly lit bathroom, I look at myself in the mirror. I start to rip my clothes to shreds until I'm finally standing in the laced up corset – black with red Sweet William flowers stitched onto it; the lace diamond-shaped nylon tights which clip to it; and the lace panties with black ribbons trailing down from them.

Opening my messenger bag, I take out my shaving and makeup kits and place them on the bathroom counter. I look one last time at myself - my old self - then begin to shave and apply the makeup that will transform me….into ***Pearl-Lace.***

There will now be, from now on, only…***Pearl-Lace*** for the ***Ripper.***

No Will Graham. Will Graham no longer exists.

Only ***Pearl-Lace*** and nothing else.

Madness shared by two.

Pearl-Lace and the ***Ripper.***

I step out of the office bathroom in my blue sleeping kimono that is decorated with koi fish and ginkgo leaves which seem to float on the surface of water. I look over to Hannibal's desk; he is nowhere to be seen.

The pencil is sharpened. The scalpel, however, is missing; this tells me he has taken it with him. The glasses of wine have been cleared away. I exit the bathroom and quietly shut the door behind me.

A creak above my head on the landing of the mezzanine library brings me to a halt, and I stand very still, listening quietly for more. No further sounds are heard, suggesting the person above was waiting for me to make a move. It reminds me of the game mahjong – one player plays the white side, the other the black. I step forward and look up.

There is no one there - or, if there is, they are hiding from my sight. I remove the kimono, placing it over Hannibal's desk chair in case he returns looking for me. I am grateful I had brought a change of my everyday clothes in my messenger bag - trousers, shirt and jacket. I

zip up the jacket to ward against the sudden chill. I walk toward the ladder, slowly ascend it and step onto the landing.

I can feel a draft coming from somewhere I cannot immediately locate. I walk toward the draft, frowning, and idly place my hand on a book that is out of place on the shelf. I jump back, startled, as the entire section of shelving silently slides back to reveal a long black tunnel, with stone steps leading down into the darkness. A small flashlight hangs on a hook on the wall; I take it, turn it on, and with dread growing in my chest, slowly begin to descend the steps.

The flashlight is surprisingly adequate for lighting my way through the dark tunnel. I imagine the tunnel was built in colonial times, judging by the stonework surrounding me. I continue walking, the only sound the clicking of the high heels I wear echoing off the walls. Just ahead of me I finally see a faint pinprick of light.

I switch the flashlight off, tucking it into my corset for safekeeping. As I near the light source, I can see it is coming from far above me. Iron rungs embedded in the wall are the only way up. Some are corroded, others look extremely fragile. Taking a deep breath in and out to calm my nerves, I begin to slowly and carefully climb the rungs, wishing I had thought to bring a change of shoes.

Reaching the top at last, I push the hatch open to reveal a small arched storage space. I clamber out and fully take in the sight before me.

If I had harbored any doubts in my mind, at that instant they vanished. I now knew beyond the shadow of *any* doubt that Hannibal was the ***Ripper***.

That the serial killer was sadistic and always killed in sounders of three was common knowledge, available to anyone with access to TattleCrime.com. But seeing this, here, now, spotlit in harsh reality... A wave of intense nausea almost fells me as I realise I never knew what he was actually *doing* with his victims.

Bile and vomit splash onto the floor, and I tremble in horror. Dear God, he has been forcing me to *eat*… I shake my head to side to side, trying not to think about it and failing miserably. Somehow I manage to quell the nausea, wipe my mouth with the back of my hand, and reach for a sharp hunting knife hanging on the rack.

Alana Bloom's laughter and Hannibal's voice coming from the dining room give me pause as I come out of the underground cellar into the kitchen. I place the hunting knife in Hannibal's knife block, hoping I will not need it (but keeping it accessible if the need arises). Taking a bottle of wine from the rack, I take down two glasses from the wine glass holder.

I pour myself a drink and another for him, when the sudden sound of Jack's voice makes me want to strangle Hannibal for doing this to me.

All the players have now been brought onto the mahjong board. I pause to think for a moment. Making my decision, I slip out of my normal clothes, placing them on the armchair near the clock on the wall. I retrieve the flashlight from my corset, placing it in his kitchen drawer. I can see that an unused tube of lipstick is in the drawer.

It is called ***"Black Ochre Sin"***. Unwrapping it, I walk to the mirror to apply it, observing how it shines black in the moonlight coming from the kitchen windows behind me. I blot it by pressing my lips together and pick up the two filled wine glasses.

I head to the dining room, hearing Jack still talking and another voice piping in – Abigail. I take a deep breath, then step around the corner into the dining room. I can hear shocked, surprised gasps come from Jack, Alana and Abigail.

Hannibal, serene in his rightful place at the head of the table, is the only one who is silent. He glares at me, then immediately gets up, stalks over to me and slaps me across the face, splitting my lower lip. "Hannibal!!!?" a now doubly shocked Alana admonishes, as I calmly turn my face and look at him.

"Oh, darling…is that really the way to treat me? I was only bringing you some more wine, though it seems you….don't want any of it," I say. There is a pause. Suddenly he pulls me flush against his chest with such force I drop the wine glasses. They shatter on the hardwood floor.

We stare deeply into one another's eyes – sea bluish-green into maroon – and the tension rises to near boiling point. It is Jack who places a hand on Hannibal's arm, saying evenly, "Hannibal, that is enough. Can't you see you're frightening Abigail?"

I turn my gaze at the same time he does, seeing she is pale and wide-eyed at the sight before her. Hannibal composes himself and slips away from me towards the kitchen. Alana follows him, eyes flashing, throwing her napkin onto the table with a muffled thump.

I feel her brush past me, eyes glancing with apparent disgust at what she no doubt considers to be Hannibal's *Prostitute or Slut or Whore*. I quietly follow Alana to the kitchen, leaving Jack to comfort Abigail. At her request he helps her upstairs so that she can rest, away from the chaos.

Seeing that Abigail is now safe, I stop just short of the door frame, peeking in to see Alana glaring at Hannibal. He has poured himself a glass of brandy, swallowing it down in one gulp.

“I cannot believe this, Hannibal. You….invite myself, Jack and Abigail to dinner, and suddenly, out of the blue, ***that*** turns up on the doorstep,” she hisses, pointing at me. The jealousy, anger and shock in her trembling voice are unmistakable.

“Alana, what I do in my private time….is actually none of your *goddamn fucking business*,” Hannibal spits out, barely containing his rage. The obscenities spilling from his usually refined lips surprise me. I had always thought him above such vulgarity.

Who knew Hannibal had such a filthy mouth on himself.

“You!!? So, was sleeping with me…..just a one night stand, then? Just a *passing amusement?*” she hisses. Something in me rises up, fearless. I step forward and begin to stride into the kitchen. But Hannibal - the devious bastard - quickly catches my eye and with a malevolent glare, stops me in my tracks.

He steps closer to Alana, hemming her in. As if in slow motion, I see Alana's right arm raise, her hand clutching something that glints softly in the light. I throw myself between them, saving Hannibal from getting his throat sliced by the knife in Alana's hand. Or...is it a knife? It looks like... I feel a sting across my cheek and stumble backwards. Blood drips down from the wound on my cheek, splashing onto the polished floor.

“There….see how you care for your *slut* now, Hannibal,” sneers Alana. All at once my legs give out from beneath me; Hannibal moves quickly forward and catches me before I can hit the floor.

His gazes down to see blood dripping onto the snow white brocade of my corset. It dawns on both of us with horrifying clarity just who has been leading him into a snare all this time.

“It wasn’t you who took the scalpel?” I ask Hannibal as he crouches beside me. He shakes his head, never moving his eyes from Alana. I slide my gaze over to her. I can now see that the glint in her right hand is Hannibal’s scalpel, gleaming with my blood.

Anger surges through me, forcing me to rise and stand defiantly straight, feeling my breathing come in laboured gasps. In one swift movement I turn and grab the hunting knife I had left in the knife block and lunge forward. A shot rings out, sending me stumbling backwards into the armchair with a thud. It feels like all the remaining breath in my lungs has been knocked out of me.

From the corner of my eye, I can see Hannibal has been sprayed with my blood from the impact of the bullet hitting my shoulder. He is looking at me, dazed. It is as though he is experiencing some traumatic memory where he had been covered in blood, as he is now.

The hunting knife slips out of my grip to hit the hardwood floor with a muffled thunk. Alana rushes forward as Hannibal suddenly collapses like a puppet whose strings have been cut. Still dazed and a bit weak, I manage to kick my shoes off, get up, knock Jack out of the way and run past him, out of the dining room and up the stairs. I can hear Jack chasing after me.

The upstairs sitting room in Hannibal's house is quiet, the only sound the ticking of the grandfather clock. Yet something is telling me I'm not alone in the room where moonlight is shining through the large window.

Blood is still dripping from the wound made by Alana onto the carpet where I stand near the window, staining it with small crimson petals. Trembling heavily, I hear a noise behind me. I slowly turn to see it is… Abigail…not Jack, standing before me. Her gentle, sweet eyes are red-rimmed and it is clear she has been crying.

"Abig-" I begin to say, reaching up with my hand, only for her to march forward and shove me with such force I cannot even react when the glass of the window shatters all around me.

Time slows down into slow motion. I can see her watching from the shattered window frame as I float down through the air. At last I hit the pavement with a sickening, bone-crunching thud, followed by blackness.

I remember nothing thereafter.

I remember nothing at all.

Epilogue – The Aftermath

Chapter Summary

PLOT TWIST!!

<u>Hannibal's P.O.V.</u>

"Thank you for coming in, Hannibal."

"Any…news on….Will's condition, Jack?"

"I'm sorry, Hannibal, to have to tell you this. Will has gone into some kind of coma. The doctors predict he…may never come out of it."

"Thank you for the information, Jack."

Coming out of the memory of the conservation I had had with Jack at Johns Hopkins Hospital, I walk to the fine leather chair and sit down, feeling Bedelia's gaze on me. I lift my head to look at her.

"It's…difficult to find words today," I manage to get out, voice breaking slightly. She notices this, seeing a crack in the "***person suit***," as she calls it. She rises from her chair and walks to the liquor cabinet, retrieving two tumblers.

She pours some whisky for the both of us. I feel like declining her offer, and yet when she hands it to me I happily take it from her. I bring it to my lips and take a sip, savoring the burn as it glides down my throat. I deserve the pain.

"Has something happened that has deeply affected you, Hannibal?" she asks me. I turn my head to gaze out the windows of her office. I watch the trees, just beginning to display their autumnal finery, slowly swaying in the wind. I am reminded of Will's curls ruffled by a passing breeze.

"Nothing has happened that will concern you, Bedelia. It's just….I'm leaving for Florence tonight," I reply. She places the tumbler down on the small table next to her chair.

"Then I guess you do feel emotions. He made you feel…different, and now you're leaving him behind," she states. She turns her face to look at me with confusion as I rise from the chair, slip on my coat, and head toward the door. "Hannibal, what are you thinking right at this moment?"

A question which makes me look back at her, sitting there in her fine dress with one petite delicate leg crossed over the other. Opening the door, I leave it unanswered.

There is no need for her to know.

<u>20 DAYS LATER</u>

The heart monitor attached to Will beeps steadily with each beat of the young man's heart, his chest rising and falling. An oxygen mask has been placed over his face.

A shadow peels itself away from the far corner of the room.

The shadow walks toward the bed. It leans over. A hand comes up to stroke a strand of hair from Will's forehead and gently tuck it behind his ear. Lips bend down to his ear, moving as they calmly whisper something so quiet it is like a gentle breeze ruffling the top of the trees.

The shadow pulls back with a whisper of "*I'll be waiting**, mylimasis.** My sweet, darling….**Pearl-Lace**."*

The shadow slinks away until there is only the sound of the heart monitor with its steady beep. The beeping rises slightly, only to go back down again. It rises again three times and back down again. At last it rises and does not falter, growing steader and stronger with each passing moment.

Within Will's body his heart is waking from its deep slumber, beating stronger and faster, until finally sea bluish-green eyes shoot wide open and lips curve into a…seductive smirk.

Will Graham….no longer exists.

Only……***Pearl-Lace….***remains now.

À SUIVRE (to be continued...)

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